

CENTRAL PROVINCE
TOURISM MASTER PLAN

Development Strategies for 2013 and Beyond

Action Plan 2013 – 2017

Provincial Ministry of Tourism

Central Province

Sri Lanka

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Executive Summary

Recognizing the importance of the tourism sector as one of the key sectors with a potential to steer regional economic growth, the Central Provincial Council assigned a team of consultants from the Sabaragamwa University of Sri Lanka to formulate a master plan for tourism development. This plan is prepared based upon the outcomes of comprehensive discussions held with various stakeholders, field visits, field surveys, observations and review of reports, documents and statistics on tourism.

The Central Province has vast potentials and opportunities to achieve economic development via tourism development. Key opportunities are the impetus brought about by the "Mahinda Chinthana-Vision for the future," by placing tourism high on the agenda of national development, end of the country's civil war and subsequent peaceful environment in the country, the emergence of new tourist markets, the development of infrastructure facilities in the province and increase in the number of international and internal flight operations. In addition, the province has the potential to develop tourism due to its diversity of attractions, climate, presence of four World Heritage sites, internationally reputed tourist destinations, political and administrative interest to develop tourism, positive attitude of community towards tourism, availability of reasonable accommodation facilities and being located strategically in the country.

Although the province has numerous potential and opportunities to achieve fast economic growth via the development of tourism, the sector has made a merger contribution to the GDP of the Central Province. Lack of a systematic plan for the development of tourism, lack of value addition to existing tourist attractions, under-utilization of tourist attractions, lack of information on tourist attractions in the province, lack of strategies to promote tourism, poor coordination among relevant stakeholders, lack of an apex body to oversee the development of tourism in the province, less priority and interest to utilize tourism potentials by key stakeholders, lack of skilled human resources, lack of infrastructure (accommodation, roads, banking, etc.), lack of basic facilities in attraction sites (sanitary, access roads, etc.), poor landscape around attractions and major cities, poor community attitudes, poor mechanism to involve community for tourism development, lack of promotion and facilitation to encourage investors (policies, bank loans, taxes and incentives), policy level constraints impeding the

development of tourism, lack of security and protection for tourists, brain drain of skilled human resource from the sector, adverse climatic conditions and malpractices in the industry (unreasonable commissions, monopoly of tour operators, etc.) are some of the issues that have contributed to the poor performance of this vital sector.

The Central Province aims at harnessing the direct and multiple effects of tourism to accelerate economic growth through employment generation, poverty alleviation and equitable distribution of economic benefits from tourism among the beneficiaries, particularly to the rural communities in an environmentally sustainable manner. Four policy principles; quality of visitor experience, cooperation, partnership and governance, sustainability and economic empowerment will guide the strategic direction for developing tourism in the province. The master plan spells out six goals on which the province should focus to drive the tourism sector forward, The goals are; developing tourism policies and stakeholder networks for the growth of tourism, developing existing and potential tourist attractions, developing infrastructure and accommodation facilities required for the growth of the tourism industry, developing human resources to cater for the industry's requirements, setting up a mechanism to disseminate tourism information and to market tourism products, and enhancing economic benefits from tourism to the community.

In order to achieve the above goals a number of strategies are proposed and the major proposals include; establishing a provincial Tourist Development Bureau (TDB) for the province. The TDB will act as the apex body to overlook tourism development activities such as policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, coordination, promotion, etc.

In order to attract more tourists to the province and make longer their period of stay, it is proposed to develop existing and potential tourist attractions through innovative product development and value addition to enable tourists discover new visitor experiences. In view of developing tourism attractions, a zoning strategy was proposed based on clusters of attractions, competitive advantage, feasibility of developing attractions and ease of administration. It was possible to identify seven zones and the development of existing and potential tourist attractions are proposed based on these zones.

There has been little or no systematic effort to market tourism products and disseminate tourism information in the Central Province. Vigorous marketing efforts and the

dissemination of tourism information, focusing on potential market segments is essential for attracting both local and international tourists to the province. As tourism marketing entails considerable investment as an initial step, a promotional strategy based on a comprehensive web portal developed with the involvement of all the main stakeholders is proposed.

One important dimension of sustainable tourism development is to ensure benefits from tourism are equitably distributed among the stakeholder, particularly the local communities. Since tourism development is considered as the engine of economic growth of the province. To ensure that benefits of tourism development are accrued to the local community. Some important strategies are proposed to ensure gainful community participation in tourism development.

It is expected that the master plan will guide the provincial council and the relevant stakeholders in generating sustained growth for the tourism sector in a socially acceptable, environmentally sound and economically viable manner, within the purview of the national tourism policies and strategies.

Abbreviations

CCT	Central Cultural Triangle
CP	Central Province
CPC	Central Provincial Council
DA	Department of Ayurveda
DCT	Department of Culture and Tourism
DOA	Department of Archaeology
DOF	Department of Forest Conservation
DOR	Department of Railway
DOW	Department of Wildlife Conservation
DPS	Dambulla Padeshiya Sabha
DSDs	Divisional Secretariat Divisions
DZ	Department of Zoology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDB	Industrial Development Board
MC	Municipal Council
MEE	Ministry of Electricity and Energy
MS	Ministry of Sports
MTCP	Ministry of Tourism - Central Province
PC	Provincial Council
PS	Pradeshia Sabha
RDA	Road Development Authority
SLTDA	Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
TDB	Tourism Development Bureau
TPCP	Tourist Police of the Central Province
UCD	Urban Council – Dambulla
UCK	Urban Council – Kandy
UCM	Urban Council – Matale
UCNE	Urban Council - Nuwara-Eliya
UDA	Urban Development Authority